

Guidelines for ACUC Membership and Deliberative Processes

This Guideline is intended to emphasize and reiterate both the regulatory requirements and the “best practices” that have developed among the NIH Institutes and Centers (IC) regarding Animal Care and Use Committee (ACUC) membership and the conduct of required reviews and deliberations.

The Animal Welfare Regulations¹ (AWRs) and Public Health Service Policy² (PHS Policy) mandate several conditions which all NIH ACUCs must meet:

- No more than three ACUC members may be from the same administrative unit of the facility (AWRs);
- At least one veterinarian with delegated program responsibility (AWRs and PHS Policy);
- At least one nonaffiliated member (AWRs and PHS Policy);
- At least one practicing scientist experienced in research involving animals (PHS Policy); and
- At least one member whose primary concerns are in a nonscientific area (PHS Policy).

ACUC Chairs should be permanent members of the scientific staff (or equivalent).

Consideration should be given to appointing more than one nonaffiliated member to the ACUC.

ICs should take full advantage of the NIH awards program to recognize and reward outstanding ACUC members for their efforts in support of the NIH Animal Care and Use program.

Consideration should be given to establishing terms of membership on the ACUC, which can be renewed with the concurrence of the incumbent. Three-year terms are recommended to provide for acclimation, productivity, and opportunity for holding office on the committee.

Candidates recommended for ACUC membership should have the support of incumbent committee members.

Disposition of ASP deliberations should be limited to:

- Approved
- Disapproved
- Tabled
 - a. Tabled for revision and re-review by convened committee
 - b. Tabled for revision and re-review by designated review process

ASPs with the Scientific Director as PI should have Paragraph O of the animal study proposal form, “certification of review and approval on scientific merit,” signed by the IC Director.

ASPs with the IC Director as PI should be reviewed and overseen by the ACUC of the IC which hosts the IC Director’s laboratory and research endeavors. Paragraph O of the animal study proposal form, “certification of review and approval on scientific merit,” should be signed by the host IC Scientific Director.

References

1. Animal Welfare Regulations (AWRs) – Regulations promulgated by the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, pursuant to the authority in the Animal Welfare Act, 7 U.S.C. 2131, et seq. and contained in 9 CFR, Parts 1, 2 and 3. (http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_welfare/awr.shtml)
2. Public Health Service Policy (PHS Policy) - Public Health Service Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, revised August 2002, or subsequent editions. (<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/olaw/references/phspol.htm>)

Approved -10/12/05

Reapproved 05/16/07